



**News from DIYA's intervention centre for children with AUTISM,
Tirunelveli, South India**

December 2016-Jan 2017

Thank you for your prayers for us as a family and for Diya and our kids here. We had a great Christmas celebration at Diya. Our kids and their families were invited. It was a lovely opportunity to say thank you to those sisters and brothers who are an important part of our children's lives and therapy. There was a Christmas play, some party games and a visit from Santa. The event even made it to our local newspaper!



Party game in progress – even the wiseman joined in!

In answer to our prayers, we've had four new admissions of pre-schoolers. Two of these families travel nearly an hour to get to the centre. We pray that these families will be able to sustain this amount of effort that it takes to keep their child's early intervention going. In the past, families seem to give up after a while as results in autism do not appear overnight; families just find the burden too hard to bear on a long term basis.



The Christmas tableau.

I've been able to continue with my visits, which involves working individually with children, training teachers and parents. Our plan for this year is to organise a series of parent training events which will draw parents with younger children through our doors. Please pray as we plan and execute these programmes.

We've been turned down our request for an additional two teachers, mostly for want of paper work (what else!) The government wants us to submit each child's disability certificate, which the family has to individually apply for and

receive. Not only does the government make the task an uphill one, with the amount of bureaucracy involved in this, but several families don't want that piece of paper as they feel it brands their children. Without the certificates, the government fails to acknowledge that our strength is actually as much as it is. We are appealing against this decision.

We continue to thank God for our teachers who do a wonderful job. We pray that their commitment to our children remains. We continue to pray for a second line of command as my mother is finding it harder now to manage all of the paperwork, the day to day running of the centre, besides working individually with the children.

We also need some form transport for our children. A minivan which we can lease out with a driver will be wonderful. We need a nest fund which will go towards this. A Christian radio station has donated us Rs 5000 towards occupational therapy equipment. We thank God for their kindness.

Please also pray that families that seek our help are able to see why we do what we do. It is important that in our current political climate, our actions speak louder than our words.

Other news

You will be aware that Kumar had attempted some pretty major surgery with a boy called Ramu, who had one limb which was significantly shorter than the other. Sufficient funds were raised for Phase 1 of his surgery. His poorly limb is now longer by 6 cms and he is very pleased with the results. There is still a shortfall of 8 cms and Phase 2 of the procedure will work on this. He is recovering nicely and is bearing the pain like a real soldier!

Temperatures are soaring, in Tirunelveli especially. Both our South-West and North-East monsoons have brought us very little rain and the state is bracing itself for acute water shortage. Please pray for rain.



Ramu wearing his external braces. He is riding on his father's back as he is not walking just yet. The road leading to his house is at an almost 75 degree slope. Well done to dad for managing that with Ramu on his back!

Address: 414, Coxford Road, Southampton, SO16 5LL

Charity Registration: 1142488. **Company House Registration:** 7578626

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